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Aspects of Paez Culture. The Fiesta of San Juan in Calderas, Tierradentro.

[Aspectos de la Cultura Paez. La Fiesta de San Juan en Calderas, Tierradentro.]

Segundo Bernal Villa

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I

Point of Departure

To the north of the municipio of Inzá and to the west of the confluence of the Ullucos and Páez rivers, two hours on horseback from the points just mentioned, the corregimiento /district governed by a corregidor/ of San Andrés is found on the left bank of the Pisimbalá torrent, an affluent of the Ullucos. Its name has been registered in the parochial books since 1736, when the priest José Fernández Belalcázar, as the representative of the Bishop of Popayán, initiated in San Andrés de Pisimbalá pastoral visits to the Paez pueblos.

San Andrés de Pisimbalá is a pueblo with the same characteristics that we have noted in other Paez centers; that is to say, it consists of a church, a school, the rectory, the house of the cabildo, and some others used solely for the celebration of religious fiestas. It is located on a small plateau, a ledge hanging on the declivity.

At the present time it is inhabited by whites and mestizos whose ways of life, norms of behavior, and labor practices have been imposed on the natives. Resistance to contact has been overcome, but active resentment against the white still crops out among the old people. Almost completely acculturated, many of them have sunk to the state of tenant farmers. The phenomenon of the colonization of Indians and land is the same everywhere. The Indian loses his land and sinks into servitude.

In 1926 the Municipal Council of Inzá created a settlement area with clearly delineated boundaries in a common agreement /178/ between the municipal authorities and the cabildo. The colonists established themselves in that area. The valley of the Pisimbalá torrent is narrow, but extremely fertile. It belongs in its entirety to a few families of colonists,

/178 cont./

361 who have established coffee and sugar-cane plantations and
[563] cattle ranches. The natives occupy the steep and barren sec-
177 tions.

[342] The pueblo of San Andrés consists of 23 bahareque houses /houses with walls made with two faces of sticks with mud and stone between them/ with thatched roofs. Only one is of brick and tiles. In its general lines the plan is reminiscent of that of Spanish centers: a central plaza with houses around it.

346 The church, which is large, thatched, and white, has a hand-
361 some façade, with a bell tower, arches and columns, a style reminiscent of colonial architecture; it stands in the center of the plaza and was built in the first decade of the nineteenth century by Padre Joaquín Núñez y Tobar. On its south side there stands a large, very old and dilapidated building where the school and the rectory functions; on the other sides it is surrounded by the colonists' houses.

366 There are two stores with a regular supply of merchandise, and on Wednesdays there is a small market where one beef, a few agricultural products, and chicha are sold.

133 Toward the end of the Pisimbalá valley are found the not
175 very extensive plateaus of Argentina and El Rodeo. El Rodeo has marked historical significance; for a long time it was called Segovia. In the spirit of conquest and colonization, the town of Nueva Segovia was founded there by Captain Hernando Arias Saavedra in accordance with the mandate of Governor Sancho Espinar, who in 1578 gave up these lands after his vainglorious campaign against the Paez. It was short-lived. On this same plateau Mosquera's rebellion against the government of Don Mariano Ospina Rodríguez was won by his spectacular victory over the government forces headed by
[317] General Joaquín París (1). In spite of this, the markets for

1. González, David. Los paeces /The Paez/, manuscript.

/178 cont./

133 several leagues around were supplied for a long time with the
175 salt extracted from the three salt deposits that still exist in
317 Segovia. Across from these and on the other side of the Ullucos, in Vivorá, another salt deposit was also exploited.

114 At the confluence of the small stream called El Escaño
172 and the Pisimbalá, on the right bank of the latter and at the
[139 foot of the ridge of Aguacate, the Archeological Park of /179/ Tierradentro, a branch of the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, is located on an alluvial terrace covering an area of two hectares. Founded some 15 years ago, it is in charge of the care and conservation of the archeological monuments, which have been known to the scientific world since 1936, but to which reference was made as early as around the penultimate decade of the last century, when Dr. Carlos Cuervo Márquez carried out his explorations through the "lands of the Paez and much of the Nevado del Huila." Subterranean necropolises with columns, colonnades and niches, black and red geometric painting on a white background, statuary very similar to the Augustinian, ceramics and metalwork are the principal exponents of this culture hardly known in descriptive form.

The Archeological Park of Tierradentro has served as the center of operations for the scientific expeditions which the national government has sponsored, fostered, and supported during the last 15 years.

II

Over the Zigzags of the Road

491 In order to travel on winding roads one needs horses re-
123 sistant to fatigue; a dashing spirit must yield to a solemn
494 step, firm tread, and steady pace.
492

/179 cont./

123 484 491 At 11 o'clock in the morning we left the Park, bound for Calderas. The road climbs through the Pisimbalá valley, at first on its right bank and soon on the left, after crossing a wooden bridge with a plank roof; from this bridge to the pueblo of San Andrés, three streams have to be crossed: Chapéquís, La Virgen, and the cemetery stream. Along this short distance and at the edge of the road we counted ten houses, all of them thatched except one of masonry, tiles, oil paint, modern manufacture; the others have white washed walls, painted doors, and are generally clean and orderly. They are the houses of mestizos and colonists settled on their respective fincas.

At 11:30 we left the settlement and took the path that leads to Calderas; the road goes ever upward, in slow and slippery 123 342 zigzags. As we go along, we see houses with graphite-colored roofs and walls which are black when made of mud or (and these are in the majority) yellow when they are of maize stalks; they lie as if submerged /180/ in the plantings of bananas, sugar cane, and yuca; bluish smoke rises vertically in thick columns from the openings.

123 133 [361] At 12 o'clock we came out on the Mesón, Supok in the Paez dialect, a small plateau oriented from north to south and bounded on the east and west by great depressions. Many native huts stand there.

[137] The beautiful valley of the Pisimbalá torrent comes into view in its entirety; contracted at times, then widening more, extensive in length and generally narrow, it descends in a gentle slope in pursuit of the noisy Ullucos; covered with thriving vegetation, it looks like a carpet of living green blending in its tones the stateliness of the cachimbos /búcare, Erytrina umbrosa/, cedars, guamás, gadua bamboo, and yarumos /Cecropia peltata/, and the splendor of the plantings of sugar cane and bananas and the pastures of the herders.

[131] An hour later we reached the Yukaichí ridge, the boundary of the parcialidades /territorial divisions/ of San Andrés and

/180 cont./

123 Calderas, and the water divide of the Kukiyú river and the
133 Pisimbalá torrent, the former a deep gorge, the latter an
[131] elongated basin. Toward the north, the outline of another ridge bounds the horizon and divides the parcialidades of Suin and Chinas. Prominent along it, the Vichaguau peak, the hill Dondotá with the double crests, between which, when the sky is clear, one can see Huila with its eternal snows, where the golden rays of the sun break into a silvery radiance. Toward the east one sees the hills of Chindavá and Potrerito, the heights of Togoima, and the canyon of the Páez. Toward the south stand the mountain ranges of Pangok and El Aguacate, which separates the valleys of the Pisimbalá and the Ullucos; the tablelands of Pedregal, Turminá, and Inzá; the sharp peak of Trueno /Thunder/, the "Kapich" of the natives, a summit
823 of silence, lightning, thunder, and storms. In the place where
173 the sun sets, there rises, stately and challenging, the sharp
648 peak of Hipinjí (1), on which, according to some Indians, lie
(133)
[104]

1. H = the English h.
   J = the French j.
   Sh = the French sh.

the images of saints, the bells, the clothing, the gold, and the silver which the Paez army carried away from San Sebastián de la Plata after murdering all of its white inhabitants, setting fire to the town, and filling up the famous silver mines which had given the town its name and brought large numbers of ad-
173 venturers and not a few misfortunes to the Indians. This legend
823 has fired the imagination of the whites and has led not a few to search for them. It is said that several whites went to the Hipinjí in search of the legendary treasure. At the /181/ /illustration appears here/ top of the peak a white flag was waving. One day there appeared on it the following mysterious order: "At 12 o'clock you may clear out this opening." Their enthusiasm was renewed, their fatigue forgotten, and they went to work eagerly. One worker was rewarded by blind

/181 cont./

173 fortune: his efforts brought to light a large jar overflowing with
823 gold. In his great joy he went running to his companions to tell

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173 them of the coveted find; in their eagerness they all flew to the
823 lucky spot, and oh! supreme misfortune, the treasure had vanished. Minutes later, the powder flask exploded, killing several, mutilating others, and leaving only a few alive. The whites localize the Hipinjí legend in Tumbichukue.

487 /182/ The descent to the Kukiyú is effected along a
499 vertical ridge, following a path with innumerable zigzags, an

/182 cont./

487 authentically native achievement which is a true work of
499 engineering; it could not have been done in any other spot or in any other way. The bridge over the Kukiyú was built with two thick beams over which thin cross-pieces have been fastened together with lianas; like all Paez bridges, it has a thatched roof and side rails.

III

Black, Smoking Dots on the Horizon

24/36/[133] From Yukaichí one can see almost the entire parcialidad of Calderas, exept for the left bank of the Kukiyú. On the ridge of a hill, at the end of a canyon, on a slight plateau, discreetly hidden on a gentle slope or on a bold declivity, one sees trapezoidal figures that glow like graphite, surrounded by rows of golden stalks of maize. They are the Indians' huts, built far apart, submerged in the green landscape of the plantings of bananas and sugar cane, and through whose openings a thick bluish smoke is always emerging, a sign of life and activity.

311 While to the Guajira /Goajiro/ livestock is a symbol of sustenance and the tending of herds its concomitant activity, to the Paez the land is the sustainer of man; the black layer that covers the rocks feeds the woodland /monte/ after the harvest; time will tell when it will be mature and ready for fencing in anew the clearings that will yield the longed-for maize, the plenteous arracacha, the small beans, the blooming cabbage, the thick and abundant santo wheat /trigo del santo/; in the grasslands graze the cattle with bright and variegated hides, small, swift horses of great endurance, the many herds of pigs that fight over the tender roots of shrubs, and the mild sheep that yield wool for the men's ponchos, the women's skirts, and the kuetand yahas of both.

/182 cont./

423 461 [173] [628] [648] The work on the land is a daily exercise in co-operation. Owership by an Indian is an unquestionable right, and its defense a categorical imperative. Lliban and Juan Chiracol fought the Pijao for the ownership of the land and to defend an inalienable right. Likewise, because the whites covet their land, they do not like to have them around /183/ and avoid receiving them under some pretext or other. Their security and [735] their happiness lie in the ownership of land. Poverty as they understand it, a shortage of food and livestock, is due solely to the laziness of those who suffer it.

857 868 Children grow up in continuous communion with the activities of their parents. While the girl helps her mother in household tasks and goes out with her to bring firewood from their respective clearings, the boys with their machete on their shoulder and their pouches of coca and mambe /lime/, exactly like their fathers, clean the clearings, build fences, weed their plantings, and when the maize ripens and the wheat grows tall, they spend the day defending them against the attacks of parrots, guaras, borugos, squirrels, and coatis. At an early age they are already doing the same tasks, but with the hope of building a house, marrying, raising children, and owning livestock, large quantities of coca, and sugar cane for their 342 chicha. In a way, the house is a necessary supplement to their pieces of land; furthermore, many are for the period of the clearings. The selection of a site for the house does not take into account either the beauty of the landscape or the levelness of the terrain, but rather the inaccessibility of both. Only when the house is to last for more than one generation will they attend to certain requisites: solidity, construction or privately owned land, and the selection of an adequate site by the medicine man (té éu). One fine day the owner selects [759] a site: "This is a good place to build a house and to live," he says. Then he takes there the medicine man, who during the [787] night "thinks about" whether the site is suitable or unsuitable; he chews coca and remedies, takes mouthfuls of aguardiente

/183 cont./

and blows them into the air; with a small staff called "tama" he cleaves the air in such a way that sometimes he appears to be frightening away the spirits, sometimes threatening them, and sometimes clubbing them. If the signs (reflex movements) are felt on the right side, the site is favorable; the opposite denotes that the site is uninhabitable. The spirits are angry, or there are Pijao bones and gold at the site. If the site has not been selected by the medicine man, even if the house is a handsome one it cannot be occupied, for its occupants would die, beginning with the children, continuing with the mother, and ending with the father. The medicine man himself prohibits people from living in a house built without the fulfillment of this requisite. The medicine man's dictum is rewarded with a bottle of aguardiente, an egg (1) of coca, tobacco, a

1. A measure of weight equivalent to the weight of a hen's egg.

calabash of chicha, and usually a meal with chicken. /184/ This is called "care" /cuido/. When the house is finished, the medicine man will place special remedies at the ridgepole to prevent the ghosts or echi from descending by way of it or from being angered.

Then come the mingas /communal work-parties/. A house is built with the help of others. The people are invited, including the medicine man himself, who goes to work as a laborer. The work is organized. First, they go to the woodland for wood; under the influence of the guarapo, voices resound, loud laughter is heard, and the deep sound of the "cacho" /horn/ rumbles in the montañas, multiplied by its echoes. Soon they report to the man in charge. They level out the ground that will serve as the house floor; they dig holes in which to sink the posts approximately two meters apart, driven in solidly, and tied at the top to cross-pieces with lianas (guák); the posts outline the shape of the house, and they will

/184 cont./

342 bear its entire weight. Over this frame are placed transversally
335 the pikas, beams that go from one wall to another, to strengthen
476 the entire structure. Then the four-slope roof will be raised and covered with bundles of sugar-cane leaves (flushets) or straw (sits) which are fastened around the frame, starting at the bottom; it is completed by the ridgepiece, more massive and notched in a straight line on both sides to a depth of some 50 centimeters; at the apex, some mounds of straw are piled up at regular intervals and a cross is set in each one of them. The man in charge directs the last touches from the ground: "There is not enough straw over there; there is too much here," he notes in a commanding voice.

The walls are made with tall stalks of maize placed in a row between the posts and tied with crosswise bindings, likewise of stalks. The partitions of the interior rooms and the doors, generally one, which leads to the exterior, are made in the same way.

342 In the construction all do the same tasks, except for the
476 man in charge, who supervises. Neither the man in charge nor
465 the workers are paid anything, "it is not customary to pay among the Indians"; they are merely treated to chicha, aguardiente, a meal with meat, and coca. A calabash of chicha and a bottle of aguardiente are presented to the man in charge and shared with the helpers. When the work is done, they get drunk and dance.

342 The women do not participate directly in the /185/
462 /illustration appears here/ construction work; they cook, distribute
476 food, keep the house supplied with firewood and water, talk, and delouse and comb one another.

342 Three types of dwellings may be differentiated among the
177 Paez, in accordance with the greater or lesser introduction and acceptance of foreign architectural features, since nowadays elements of foreign origin are spreading and taking root: bahareque construction, interior division into rooms, the square

/185 cont./

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177 house-plan, the use of nails, plank doors, and even locks and keys to safeguard the dwelling; likewise, whitewashing is not unknown.

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23/ The rectangular hut is the most primitive type of dwelling: tiny and light, crude and totally artless; a two-slope roof, walls of stalks laced together with an /186/ entrance door; an earthen floor; a kitchen in the center, with hides all around it; pouches suspended from the posts; on a three-legged beam, the grinding stone; a smoke-blackened interior; and living intimately with the guinea pigs.

/186 cont./
660 with the guinea pigs. These ranchos give the impression of
342 extreme poverty in their dwellings. None of them is of
bahareque.

342 The second type of dwelling, which is more widespread
177 and shows a larger number of foreign architectural elements,
is the large rectangular house with a four-slope roof, 15 to 20
meters long by four or five meters wide, with one or two doors
and two or three rooms, one of which takes up two-thirds of the
space made, and the last third is subdivided into the room in-
tended for the kitchen and the other for the chicha troughs and
[841] pantry. Not a few of the dwellings of this type have a compart-
[343] ment for menstruating women (du yate léchukue), although as
a rule small huts are built outside the house for this purpose.
[573] In this type of dwelling one commonly finds bahareque,
[352] sleeping platforms, plank doors, and sometimes whitewashed
walls.

361 The settlement of Calderas is made up of this kind of
342 dwelling. It consists of 14 houses scattered at random on a
[342] beautiful plateau of some 20 hectares, covered with pastures
[796] and crossed by drainage ditches that bring water to five of the
[346] houses, which are permanently occupied; the others, although
they have owners, serve only for religious fiestas when the
fiestero /fiesta leader/ moves there with his retinue of
mayordomos, laborers, cooks, and the utensils for serving
346 aguardiente, chicha, and food. These houses are spacious, 25
796 meters long by six meters wide; thick mud walls, with a plank
door at the entrance; the enormous sala, fiuhne wala, is 13
meters long; here stand the sugar mill, the metate (ûkukuat),
the notched ladder for climbing to the garret, the pango pil,
crudely hewn rectangular beams on which the men sit, one of
which is 10 meters long; firewood is piled in one of the corners;
the floor is of earth unevenly smoothed. The concentrations of
people who visit the fiestero in a daily stream gather in these
spacious salas; here music echoes, the albacero /fiestero's
assistant/ is taken care of, the dances take place, the drunks
sleep, and the sugar cane is milled.

/186 cont./

346 There are four other small rooms, five meters /187/ long
796 by three meters wide. Two of them are independent of each other, with their respective doors opening into the sala; one serves as a kitchen and the other to roast the maize griddle-cakes. At the other end of the house are the two other rooms, connected with each other by one door and with the sala by another. The workers sleep in one, and in the other are the troughs of chicha, the bottles of aguardiente, and the laurel candles.

342 The third type of dwelling, very scarce in Calderas, has
249 a square floor plan. It has the sala, two kitchens, and the du yate léchukue. Whatever type of dwelling a Paez family may own, they all have as an indispensable accessory the sugar mill,
[262] either inside the house or outside it. Actually, if it is kept in
[273] mind that the basic sustenance of the natives is provided by
[276] maize, cabbage, chicha, and coca, this instrument is indispensable.

342 In addition, each house is supplied with water, taken from
312 springs, streams, or falls, through the extremely skillful construction of ditches which skirt the valleys, hills, and slopes. Their lands have abundant water. They are not familiar with artesian wells.

342 In a way, the enormous salas in the houses of Calderas
177 represent the ramadas which are found among the whites,
249 mestizos, and acculturated Indians of San Andrés; they are built independently of the dwellings, with a sugar mill and an oven to boil down the cane juice and make panela. In this parcialidad, the panela industry is quite well developed. In Calderas it does not exist.

584 Among the Paez, land, marriage, family, and house form
583 a close and indissoluble unit. It lends warmth and meaning to
[183] a number of emotional, sentimental, and sociological complexes. This begins when the pubescent boy feels the need for a partner who will help him in his work and assuage to some extent the rigors of solitude. The love awakened by a dark, shapely maiden impels him to ask her parents for her. "Give my your daughter. I am alone and need help in my work."

/187 cont./

583 says the youth after he has conferred upon the parents-in-law
[584] bottles of aguardiente and calabashes of chicha according to his means. The parents always accede to the request.

At midnight he goes off with her to the house of his parents, if he does not have one of his own. They will live together for several months, one year, two...; during this time he will find out whether the woman can cook, grind maize, carry water and firewood, weave ponchos and /188/ pouches, and he will become familiar with her fidelity, temperament, and
583 character. Only then will he look for a sponsor /padrino/,
585 seek out the priest, take communion and receive the nuptial
[608] blessing, and return to his house, where the bubbling troughs of chicha, the savory "mute" /maize stew/ boiling in the pot, the crude guitars and the pleasing chirimías /a kind of orchestra/ will complete the sealing of the union. They will go through the night, and sometimes days as well, drinking, eating, and dancing.

462 The building of the house on the land of his property will
594 soon follow. Gradually, the man will furnish it with pangopil
[372] for sitting, crude plates and spoons for eating, pots for cooking, hides and sometimes raised platforms for sleeping, a sugar mill to mill the juicy cane; he will bring water from distant sources, provide troughs in order to ferment chicha, purchase machetes, axes, and picks to work the land, plant bananas, sugar cane, onions, and cabbages in his garden; he will put together the barzos where he will keep the bundles of wheat, the ears /caspas/ of maize, the mulberry-colored beans; he will acquire a dog and also -- why not? it has been his ambition and his hope -- he will buy cattle for the fiestas and a horse to race for San Juan and to operate the sugar mill. The woman, on her part, will tend the guinea pigs, breed her chickens and turkeys, look after the pigs so they will not be lost, shear the sheep, weave her yaha gwala (fique bags) for carrying the compact ears of maize, the rustling beans, and the green cabbages

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462 from the plantings; she will laboriously make the multicolored
594 kuetand yahas which she will give as tokens of love to her hus-
[257] band. The children, who "are a blessing of God," will come and help the man work the land or lighten the woman's kitchen chores.

594 The household lends individuality, a sociological frame-
183 work, status, and function to the family. Land, a house, and a family are specific ambitions of the Paez people. Possibly they represent their most cherished ideals in life.

IV

Live Ritual Fire

372 In the mind of every individual, and in the spirit of the family, fire is a symbol, a symbol of the house and of the home. A house without fire is a dead, abandoned house.

372 In ancient times, when the Pijao went about spreading
773 terror and death, when the caciques came down on the /189/ /illustration appears here/ roaring waters of the great rivers beneath the imposing dark night sprinkled with stars, and even much earlier, the Indians began their daily round by requesting fire from an old, white-haired woman. This fire died out when night spread its dark cloak over the world. Only the old woman's fire was immortal. The monotony of this daily request for fire was transmuted into anguish when the wicked old woman decided to leave and take the fire with her in a piece of wood. They all ran after her, seized the firebrand, and obtained fire from it for all the Indian households. This fire could be preserved.

Thus run the mythical accounts of the origin of fire. They reflect its importance. The manner in which it is preserved, the care which is exercised so that a fire is always /190/ burning in the house, seem to be superstitious attitudes from an ancient

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372 cult of fire. In times past, fire was obtained with "steel and
773 tinder." Whatever the case may be, the mythical accounts

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372 disclose the usury of the owner of fire and anxiety when they were
773 on the verge of losing it. Nowadays, when through carelessness
[177] it goes out in a household, the matches of the whites are used to revive it.

513 The Indians go to bed early. At seven o'clock at night the
512 parents and the children lie down in a common bed on the dry hides of cattle, keeping on their bodies the clothes that covered

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P /190 cont./
513 them during the day. They use no blankets. The woman
512 leaves sufficient wood on the fire for heat to protect them from
P the rigors of the cold of the night which filters through the
[262] stalks of the walls. In addition, over the fire there is a pot
[264] of "mute," beans, and cabbage, which, when cooked, will
P constitute the meal at daybreak. The fire is revived by the
[462] woman at 11 o'clock, an operation that is repeated about two o'clock in the morning. At four o'clock in the morning everyone is up. At dawn the woman distributes the food, and then the men come out of their houses with machetes in their belts, kuetand yaha filled with coca and mambe, to clear the woodland, weed the fields, or help with the hard work of their neighbors.

V

Anger, Rancor, and Politics

P
829 The Calderas Indians are arch conservatives. Tradition, pride, and a rebel spirit have much to do with their passion for politics. I do not speak of the conservative doctrine or of political concepts. They are conservatives by temperament and group solidarity. By the same token, their fanaticism is
P 829 proverbial. The mere mention of the word "liberal" makes
609 them break out in a rash. Anyone who comes to Calderas for the first time is approached by the Indians out of curiosity. "What is your name?" "What do you want?" "Why did you come?" "What are you, liberal or conservative?" These are the questions with which the natives and even the local cabildo besiege the visitor. It should be added that those who wish to save their skins or to avoid being run out of town must maintain that they are conservatives. It is said that in 1952 they
P [797] [871] did not want to accept the Missionary Sisters who came to run
C [658] the school which is supported by the national government.

/190 cont./

609 It was necessary for someone to tell them that they were sent by
797 /191/ Laureano Gómez before they all said: "Well, then, let
871 them remain."
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666 In spite of their stubborn conservatism, the leaders of the
829 municipio cannot manage to make them vote for their chosen candidates unless they first get their ration of meat, chicha, and aguardiente. The ration and the vote form an indivisible unit.

829 "I am godo /Goth, pejorative for Spaniard/ to the marrow, a true conservative," exclaimed one of the important men of
[773] Calderas while he was drunk. "Juan Chiracol also was a conservative," said another.

829 The Indians of Tierradentro have been liberals since 1860,
175 thanks to the victor's aura gained by Mosquera on the plains
648 of Segovia. "The battle of Segovia" --says the padre David González --"in which the Indians took part and in which Mosquera encouraged the native ferocity, and the march on Bogotá, which fell to the rebel general, made him a demigod
[464] in the eyes of the Paez. Since the first days of the colony they have venerated the name Mosquera; the Marquis don Cristóbal Mosquera y Figueroa had been their master, their encomendero, he had taken them to Popayán in gangs to work on his haciendas, he had given to them the huge lands of his
[665] encomienda... Naturally the Indians of Tierradentro have been strongly bound since 1860 to the political faction which represented Mosquera, liberalism. In the armed struggles which later scourged the nation, the Paez staunchly bore the liberal standard."

829 In view of this, the political affiliation of the Calderas
665 Indians is an odd one; up to less than a decade ago, they formed a conservative island in the midst of a liberal majority. Possibly this attitude conceals a great desire to defend their lands. The Calderas people have no marked sympathy for the neighboring parcialidades. "They are Reds," say the natives,

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/191 cont./

829 665 while the others contend for their land and reduce the extent of the parcialidad. This is what the people of Avirama, Togoima, and Lame have done. Nowadays, their relations appear to be cordial, for their political differences, at least, seem to have been obliterated.

157 The Paez are extremely pugnacious, aggressive by nature; they are easily aroused and only with difficulty erase rancor from their minds. Their psychological characteristic seems [648] to be the explosion. History gives many authentic proofs. [669] Adverse to the Spanish yoke, destroyers of the colonial settlements, /192/ in the times of the republic they have served as instruments for blind ambitions and political revenge, and nearly all the civil uprisings have been nourished with their blood. They adjust easily to the military, guerilla, barbarian [579] spirit. The riots that have taken place in the present century are memorable: La Quintinada, La Collada, and the 28th of January, the first of which took place in 1916, the second in 1932, and the third in 1950, out of motives of racism, religion, and political rancor, respectively.

Persistence in vengeance, hair-raising and fearsome crimes, and the spilling of blood characterize many aspects of the social and political life of these Indians.

VI

Fiesteros, Albaceros, and Mayordomos

796 623 About three months before the celebration of the fiesta, the cabildo begins to select the names of the fiesteros /fiesta leaders/ for the following year. When the candidates have been chosen, the entire cabildo goes to their home, where after much dilatory chatting they announce the authorized choice. The offer is rejected at first, but eventually the great honor is accepted.

/192 cont./

796 Then the new fiesteros look for assistants, called albaceros and mayordomos. At the close of the fiesta, accompanied by the cabildo and the old fiesteros, they go to the priest to be put on record and announced as the fiesteros for the following year. Each receives a church banner, and then in procession they walk round the church and proceed at once to one of the houses of the pueblo, previously requested from its owner, amidst the bursting of firecrackers and the strains of music. [273] There, chicha and aguardiente will be served to the albacero, mayordomos, and the others present, even before they have finished drinking the liquor of the old fiestero. They will also be given a meal, for which a bull has been slaughtered.

794 796 The months go by. The need for money to cover the costs is pressing. Fiesteros and albaceros, with their wives and sometimes also with a few friends, leave their land and, keeping to themselves, set out for Inzá, La Plata, or Popayán to sign up as laborers on haciendas which they know personally or through [465] trustworthy references. Their daily pay will be one peso and food. Not even coca /193/ /illustration appears here/ is part of their ration. Husband and wife do the same work and earn the same pay.

After two months they return once more to their land, carrying in their pouches gunpowder, wicks, and salt. Some- [574] times, a machete fastened to the belt. The fiestero bears the brunt of the expense: camarico (1) /footnote 1 is missing; the camarico is the gift customarily given to a guest/ for the priest and the latter's fees; candles for the altar; gunpowder for the Mass and the social functions; the cleaning of the church; "care" for the albacero and hospitality to visitors for the period of three weeks. The albacero is in charge of the celebration of vespers: lights for the church, the vacaloca /"crazy cow," a feature of the fiesta/, fireworks, and gunpowder.

The mayordomos contribute money (one peso) for the priest's fees and candles to light the church.

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796 Both the fiestero and the albacero have laborers whom they select themselves. The fiestero has the following: three for the

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[788]

distribution of food; three chicha-makers, two men and one woman; two millers of sugar cane; one fireworks-maker and two women as
796 cooks. The transporting of the sugar cane is done by volunteers
465 who help out daily in exchange for drink. The albacero has the same laborers, and although he does not kill a beef to reward them, he does sacrifice a pig to this end, especially for the fireworks-maker, with all the honors of the table and the demands of etiquette.

[p. 22 skipped in paginating - Analyst]

[p.22 skipped in paginating-analyst]

/194 cont./

796 The albacero and fiestero with their respective wives do not work; their task is to look after the people.

796 554 Every religious fiesta has a chief fiestero and a secondary one, with their respective retinues of albaceros, mayordomos, and laborers. There is no difference of rank between the two. Both spend the same amount of money and perform the same tasks. Only the chief one performs them first; he thus has [578] primacy. Nevertheless, a certain rivalry seems to exist between the two. According to the extravagance and hospitality, there are comments as to whether the fiesta of one was better than that of the other. Prestige is also involved here. Thus, of the two fiesteros who gave the fiesta of San Juan this current year, that of the second one was said to be better, since he did not get drunk, attended all the religious ceremonies, and [273] looked after people very well. Only the last of these remarks is valid, because the abundance of food, chicha, and aguardiente was fundamental; continuous drunkenness is the mark of a good fiesta. On the other hand, he knew how to look after the people because he had already been fiestero at another time.

796 Three weeks before the festive day activity begins in the households of the fiesteros: milling the sugar cane, the distillation of the aguardiente, entertainment of visitors, and the making of candles and firecrackers.

Two weeks before the Mass, the fiesteros, accompanied by the cabildo, music, and firecrackers, go to take over the pueblo house, with their wives, cooks, chicha-makers, and food distributors.

All the public entertaining will be done in the spacious sala. The church banner will wave in front of the house.

4:Bernal Villa--24 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

VII

The Milling, the Chicha and the Chicha-makers

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It remains to be said that the fiesta begins with the milling. Although it is common to use a horse to operate the sugar mill, it is more usual at fiesta time to move it with human arms, masculine or feminine. It makes no difference. The two laborers for the milling squat on either side of the sugar mill, and one hands over the cane while the other receives the bagasse, which is piled up at one side to be handed back again; this is done up to 12 times in order to extract as much juice [273] as possible. The millers do their work in silence when they are not drunk; while they do it with diligence, there is relaxation, laughter, shouts, and imprecations when they are under the influence of alcohol.

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The juice is gathered in troughs, or less frequently in calabashes and pots; it is heated to near the boiling point and then emptied into the troughs, in which, inasmuch as they are well "cured," fermentation is rapid. The troughs are made of huge tree trunks that reach up to one meter and 50 centimeters in thickness and four or five meters in length. As they are depleted through consumption, they are refilled with fresh [285] cane juice. The troughs are covered with small mats made 273 exclusively for the purpose. On the following day it is bubbly, 796 yellowish, with a pungent, sweetish flavor. It is the beka pes (strong chicha) of the natives, who drink it with relish and delight. Five gourdfuls of this liquor are sufficient to make them 273 drunk. Elsewhere called guarapo, while the Paez call it chicha, 182 it is of great importance in their social life and diet. With its 796 help the religious fiestas gain meaning, the mingas are carried [262] out, baptisms and weddings are made more pleasant, and visitors are entertained.

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Work without chicha is inconceivable, and while they work they get no food whatever; they merely drink chicha and chew

/195 cont./

262 373 461 [276] coca. Chicha thus provides the calories for work, while coca dulls the feeling of hunger. The consumption of chicha is general among men and women, old people and children. There is no household without chicha for any length of time. And during the short lapses when it runs low, they buy it or [43] visit the households that have some. Among friends it is not sold, but given as regalement: /196/ "talking, laughing, regaling," as the Indians accurately describe the situation.

249 273 461 Milling for the fiestas takes place daily and is in direct proportion to the number of visitors. Milling for the mingas lasts two days, one week for baptisms, and up to a month for weddings.

273 415 The largest containers for chicha are the troughs, but use is also made of pitchers and large earthenware pots buried in the ground up to their rims.

273 463 796 The chicha-makers are the absolute masters of the troughs while they are fulfilling their function. They distribute the chicha, and even the fiestero himself must ask them for the amount desired. No one takes chicha without their consent. Furthermore, they accept the gifts which the visitors give to the fiestero. The latter merely voices his thanks. Although they keep taking chicha, they do not get drunk, so as to perform their task properly. They will have their day when they can do so.

VIII

Sugar-cane Aguardiente

273 [796] At fiesta time, aguardiente is distilled every two or three days. The distillation is quite easy. The still is prepared in the following way:

[415] A good-sized earthenware pot, 50 to 60 centimeters high and 25 to 30 centimeters in diameter, is filled with guarapo

/196 cont./
273 fermented for two days, mixed with anise, dill, cloves, cinna-
415 mon, anisillo, and bitopiskue. Sometimes verbena is also added. It rests on three stones which make up the hearth. Over the edges of this pot, and with the interstices filled with a paste of ashes to avoid any loss of steam, is put another pot of regular size: 30 centimeters high and 20 centimeters in diameter. Inside this one is put an ovoid wooden bowl, grooved, with a handle likewise grooved, which is connected to a reed tube that runs through the pot at mid-height, and through which the aguardiente runs into the containers (liters /litros/ and bottles). The base of this pot is pierced to permit the guarapo steam to go through. Above this pot is placed a copper pan about 15 centimeters high and 30 centimeters in diameter; the junctures are covered with a paste of ashes. On this pan there falls a continuous jet of cold water brought from the outside through a bamboo channel; the surplus comes out through a /197/ /illustration appears here/ reed tube set in an opening near the rim. When this fall of water is not feasible, the women undertake to change constantly the warm water for cold.

Stills of this kind distill approximately 15 liters.

The amounts of the ingredients are as follows:

Guarapo, two-thirds of the container.

Anise, three eggs /a measure; see footnote 1, p. 9/ (from Silvia or Neiva).

Dill, approximately 1 pound.

Anisillo (an aromatic herb), one egg.

Bitopiskue (a pungent herb), approximately half a pound.

Cloves, ten centavos (one ounce).

/198/Cinnamon, ten centavos (one ounce).

273 The distillation has nothing mysterious about it, although
784 it does have its precautions. Anyone can be present, but no one can say "venda" /bandage/, because the distillation would not produce anything. If someone goes out, he must do so in silence, but preferably he should not go out, because he will

/198 cont./

273 take with him the "heart" of the aguàrdiente, thus reducing the
784 quantity and detracting from its quality, for it will be "cold

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273 and tasteless."
[784] The distillation is done on any day and at any hour; the tax collectors do not go this far; control of this kind has never been permitted, and anyone who dared to do it would risk his
[186] life. Children drink this liquor from the age of three. Abstainers are inconceivable; "only Protestants do not drink," they conclude.

4:Bernal Villa--28 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

/198 cont./

IX

The Wax Comes from the Woodlands

796 Before the fiestero goes to stay in the pueblo, the laborers make the candles and distill the aguardiente while the fireworks-maker produces the firecrackers and rockets.

388 824 The candles are made with the wax of the wild laurel (1)

1. Myrica pubescens Willd.

recently extracted from seeds gathered months earlier from the bushes in the woodlands. Laurel, of course, is a shrub with lanceolate leaves, which grows wild in the clearings after the harvest. During the months of April and May the branches are heavy with lead-colored and tiny seeds very similar in form to the fruit of the coffee tree. They are a favorite food of the wild pigeons, and for this reason, while they are ripening, the owner, or preferably his children, constantly frightens them [756] away. This is a reinforcement of the magic protection supplied [789] by the medicine man at the suggestion of the owner of the woodland. He has performed the exorcism to frighten away the unwanted birds: he has loaded his shotgun with chayuts (2) and

2. Escrofulareacea.

shot at the pigeons. They will not return.

[415] The seeds are gathered in fique bags. Ten workers gather approximately one arroba in one day. /199/ For the period of one month the seeds will be left to dry, scattered in a corner of the house, so that the wax will come out white and not green as would happen if this were not done.

388 To extract the wax, the seeds are packed into small sacks or bags, boiled, and pressed at once. The wax falls with the hot water into a round container; on the following day, the water that remains at the bottom of the container is removed, and the wax is left to solidify further.

4:Bernal Villa--29 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

/199 cont./

388 43 Up to a few years ago, the extraction of laurel wax was the only industry among the Calderas people that brought them monetary returns. And it was the sole article of active trading with the whites. At first the price was good; one peso a pound; nowadays it is barely worth 40 centavos. Thus, there is no 388 market for this article. The fiesteros and the albaceros have chunks of wax in their chambers. The laborers melt it in a copper pan and pour it at once into bamboo tubes, mixed with hot water so that it will not solidify at once. Into it they dip the notched wicks of different lengths so as to saturate them with wax, then bring them out into the air so that they will harden, saturate them once more with wax, and continue in this way until the candle has acquired the desired thickness. Several dozen are made; some large ones for the table, others of medium size for the church, and smaller ones for the mayordomos.

X

Gunpowder

389 829 648 The Paez are totally unfamiliar with the method of making gunpowder. And to explain how it is obtained, they tell the painful legend that it is made from human beings. It comes from a fat man, they say, fattened expressly for this purpose. He is hung up, a red-hot iron rod is inserted in his rectum; lard drips down; and this lard is the gunpowder. For this reason, they do not want to send their children to distant lands where the white man lives. They believe that they would be used to obtain gunpowder. "The white men greatly desire Indians in order to obtain gunpowder."

389 439 The Indians buy gunpowder in the urban centers. They work it up. The technique is almost universally known.

4:Bernal Villa--30 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

/199 cont./

389 Explosive charges are made in the following way. The powder is packed into small sheepskin cartridges; these cartridges /200/ are tied tightly with maguey thread. Then they are pierced in such a way that the powder can come in contact with the correspondent fuse. They make with these explosive charges:

Firecrackers: a charge attached to a short stick.

Skyrockets: reed tubes full of powder, with one explosive charge, attached to a long pole. They rise to considerable heights and end with an explosion.

Stingers: firecrackers made of three charges attached to a stick.

Castle: a structure resembling half an ellipse, made of flexible rods to which the explosive charges are attached.

[796] The fireworks-maker is selected especially by the fiestero or the albacero, and at the time of the fiesta he distributes the firecrackers personally among the elders with a great show [465] of deference. The albacero must kill a pig or a sheep to reward him for his work.

[461] The making of these objects is slow: a month or even more, not because it is complicated, but because steady work on it is tiresome.

389 During the making of these firecrackers, with the relative 787 tranquility that this implies, a man may come to know of a 75 destiny which he possibly had not suspected: becoming a medicine man. While sitting at his work he may feel the "signs" that herald his future activity. This was the case with a medicine man of Calderas. As a young man he knew nothing about remedies or "signs." But as he was making firecrackers, he felt the signs. He had five children at the time. After that he learned what the good and the bad remedies were from another famous medicine man. He put his knowledge into practice, cured a sick man, and devoted himself to being a medicine man. The signs, they say, are sent by God.

4:Bernal Villa--31 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

/200 cont./

XI

Gourd Vessels and Etiquette

415 554 273 There are three types of gourd vessels in which chicha is distributed and whose traditional order of use reflects hierarchy, majority, and high status; some gourd vessels are used for all those present, of both sexes and all ages; others, only for a specific class of people.

[192] The first type is small with an ovoid opening, made of half a gourd. In the Paez dialect it is called shup /201/ /illustration appears here/ shachi. All visitors, without distinction as to sex, age, or status, are presented with two matés of this type: the first one contains "strong water" to quench thirst, while the second contains chicha, the authentic strong chicha.

The second type of container is the shachi pitán (gourd-vessel capitan), of greater capacity than the first, ovoid in shape, and open at one end. The most respected persons of both sexes, adults and elders, are given chicha in these gourd vessels, /202/ after taking it from the shup shachi. They indicate a certain deference on the part of the host, and by the same token he wishes them to get drunk. Those who are favored with these gourds offer them to all present, who take them, taste the contents, and return them to the hands of the owner. The shachi pitán has gone from mouth to mouth, but the contents remain practically untouched; the owner is to drink it.

The laborers and mayordomos who are in his service, the albacero, the síndico /trustee/, and the highly respected elders, after having received chicha in the shup shachi and in the shachi pitán, receive a larger gourd vessel in which there is a tiny one (shachi léchukue), which is called suilté. The presentation of this has an etiquette of its own. The host comes out with the suilté in his hands, fills the shachi léchukue with

/202 cont./

415 chicha, and hands it to a person favored and respected by him;
554 the latter takes it, drinks from it, and returns the small gourd;
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415 then he is given the suilté. In turn, he fills the small gourd and
554 gives it to the man who presented it to him. Then he distributes
273 the chicha among all those present, beginning with the adults,

/202 cont./
415 men first and then women, and ending with the children of both
554 sexes. No one is left without a share.
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XII

The Cleaning of the Church

346 The so-called church of Calderas, a masonry structure, is a dilapidated old building, long and tall, with a two-slope thatched roof and a hemispherical bell tower supported by four beams set into the ridgepiece. Only the front of four columns with cornices and semicircular arches which form an antechamber lends the whole a certain charm.

346 What is called the cleaning of the church is the removal
794 of a few weeds that grow in the pavement in front of it and
796 clearing a line that encircles a small plaza. The task is minimal, but it is always performed. The act is symbolic more than anything else; what matters is the meeting of the fiesteros with their respective albaceros and laborers; an occasion for taking care of the albacero, an opportunity for merriment, talk, jokes, and even games.

Some 12 days before the fiesta and on a Thursday, accompanied by the cabildo, music, and firecrackers, the fiestero leaves his house and goes to occupy one in the pueblo. He takes /203/ along the bull that will be sacrificed on the following day. Two days later, that is to say, on Monday, the cleaning of the church is carried out. On rare occasions
[202] it is done on a Wednesday. The ringing of bells announces the invitation and later tells the people that the cleaning is over, whereupon they drink the two calabashes of chicha which each fiestero has brought; the firecrackers are set off; "the albacero has earned a meal," they say, and deserves the honors of the table. The fiestero will take care of him with

/203 cont./
346 meat and "mute," as well as more chicha and aguardiente.
794 After lunch the albacero goes home. There he waits for the
796 fiestero, who in the afternoon will bring him more chicha, more aguardiente, and more food.

796 A week after the cleaning of the church, the priest will
793 come to officiate at the religious ceremonies.

XIII

Instruments, Music and Dance

533 The musical groups of the Calderas people, true chirimías, /a kind of orchestra/, are deservedly famous both for the number of the musicians and for the beauty of their interpretations. Many are soft and delicate, most of them sad tunes,
534 but there are joyous ones as well. The musical instruments are few.

The flute (kuvi), made of a reed some 70 centimeters long; it has seven holes made by burning: the one in the upper part which serves for blowing, and 35 centimeters farther down are found the others, which correspond to the fingers of the hands, at intervals of three centimeters apart. They distinguish two types of flutes: those that produce melodic sounds, kuvinéhuish (major flute) and those that produce low tones, kuvinuch (minor flute).

[281] The bass drum (kut), made with the skin from sheep, calf, goat, or deer, the hair of which has been removed by fermentation underground.

The tambourine, around the edge of which is put several pairs of movable circular pieces of tin which produce a rhythmic sound.

The side drum or snare drum and the triangle to mark the rhythm.

/203 cont./

534 Some natives own and play guitars acquired in Popayán,
237 but there are some that they make themselves out of armadillo
439 shells.

The following are the compositions of ceremonial type
533 which are not accompanied by dancing.

/204/ /Illustration appears here./

Kulś ik kui (bull-slaughter-piece). Musical composition which is played at the moment of killing the beef to which the albacero and the laborers of the fiestero will be taken care of. Informants claim that this musical piece has no significance other than to entertain the people.

Plaza pá kui, a musical composition played when the musicians reach the church.

Misa kase kui, played when the Mass is over.

Chichi pékue kui, played when the meat is cut in pieces to treat the albacero. The workers place the chunks of meat on a trunk and cut them into small pieces with a machete /peinilla/.

There are other compositions peculiar to wedding ceremonies.

/205/ Novio mesa úku, played at the start of the wedding meal.

Úpiate kui, played halfway through the nuptial banquet.

Tunzi kamba kui, played at the close of the nuptial banquet.

All of these compositions are melodious and in 3/4 or 4/4 time.

The religious fiestas, mingas, weddings, and baptisms are occasions for music. There is no music at burials or at wakes for children.

[868] Musical compositions are learned from the "elders" out of personal interest. From childhood they learn how to play the bass drum, the side drum, and the triangle with great skill. They try the flute later. While rhythm instruments

/205 cont./

533 are played by a large number of people, those playing the melody (flutes) are few and usually restricted to a few families.

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533 The women do not play any musical instrument.

Secular singing is unknown; only religious songs are sung at the hours of prayer, the Mass, and the procession.

535 [171] The dancing of the Calderas people is stylized and very similar to the Colombian bambuco. It is danced by mixed couples, separately or joined together. As a rule the dancers take on a certain air of gravity and concentration, and the onlookers follow their movements attentively. The woman always

/205 cont./

535 keeps her head low, with her eyes on the ground, attentive to the musical notes which she seems to interpret with her movements. One foot forward, then one back, in swift alternation; she suddenly stands in her partner's way, then does an about-face. She keeps her arms motionless against her abdomen.

The man, on his part, dances with his forehead held high, his arms motionless against his thighs, his face joyous. From time to time he shouts: "Viva the Conservative Party!" or "Viva el Cauca!"

It is customary for the fiestero and the albacero to dance with each other's wives, after their respective "care."

535 It is the rule for the newlyweds and the sponsors to open
608 the dancing at weddings. In the midst of the dancing and at
585 different times the bride and groom kneel before their sponsors /padrinos/ to receive /recitarles/ the blessing, the bride before the padrino and the groom before the madrina. The latter
[576] bless them and give them their hands to help them rise. After the dance of the newlyweds and the sponsors, the others present may dance, and in the midst of the dancing they, too, greet one another /206/ by placing the right hand over the other person's left shoulder and pressing it.

535 Although one colonial writer speaks of specific dances, nowadays they are only a memory; it is said that there is performed in Avirama the dance of the little bird (vicha ku), danced by young girls at dawn. Calderas informants say that it is very ugly and for this reason they do not dance it. It may possibly correspond to the Itza-ko noted by Pittier de Fábrega.

XIV

The Great Day

796 Before dawn raises its pale face above the black rims of the eastern peaks, the women have already left their hard beds

/206 cont./

796 of cowhide and are busy cooking the food, hastily reviving the kitchen fire. Meanwhile, the men talk and laugh hilariously.

[264] The house of the fiestero is bustling with activity. At six
[262] o'clock in the morning men and women have breakfasted on "mute," cabbage, bananas, yuca, and meat. Then, the women put on to cook, in a copper pan with a diameter of one meter and 50 centimeters, the mute for the laborers' lunch and for feasting the albacero after vespers. Next to this vessel they place another one of clay, slightly smaller, full of shelled maize with ashes. About four arrobas of maize will be consumed during this day.

With the bundles of firewood piled in one corner of the kitchen, and the water stored in jars, the women sit around the fire to nurse their children, spin wool, weave their pouches, and converse about matters of daily life.

In the course of the day there will be the sacrifice of the beef; the presentation of the "camarico" to the priest; the greeting of the albacero; the celebration of vespers with the vacaloca game; concluding with the meal given by the fiestero at midnight. On the following day there will be the Mass, a procession, the handing over of the banners to the new fiesteros, and the care given to the albacero.

/207/ XV

Scene between the Second Fiestero and Albacero

[805] The position of the sun indicates that it is nine o'clock in the morning. In the house of the albacero the muffled sounds of the bass drum and the melody of the flutes are heard.

While they play, the fiestero and his wife visit the albacero with a pot of stew /sancocho/, a bottle of aguardiente, a sky-
[539] rocket, and a candle. The fiestero hands over what he has brought to the albacero, and his wife to the latter's wife. They sit around the fire. The dialogue is interesting:

/207 cont./

796 Albacero: The albacero is always behind the fiestero.
539 We shall make him dance.

Fiestero: We shall take chicha and have a good time.

The offers of chicha and aguardiente are repeated.

--Let us go to the slaughter of the little bull.

--And all of a sudden the bull would kill me, replies the albacero, cutting short the invitation of the fiestero. And he adds:

--You do a great deal in taking care of people; you seem to have more. I do not have anything.

--We are not just any family. We are Muse, replies the fiestero.

--What do you want from me that you do so much for me? Asks the albacero.

Meanwhile other men express their thoughts in sentimental and philosophical tones:

--This is our pueblo... We must talk... When we die, we shall not return.

--Because now that we are alive, and on our land, we must see each other often.

The old master of the house interrupts the conversation:

--It is well if you go with us. (Eviuha guechi pikin ustau.)

It is time to slaughter the beef. The fiesteros leave the house of the albacero. The musicians follow them.

XVI

Sacrifice of the Beef

231 Since the previous day the beef has remained in front of
796 the house tied to a post. Next to it are several piles of long, dry pieces of wood.

/208/ /Illustration appears here./

/208/

231
796 At about ten o'clock in the morning the special guests of the fiestero get ready to kill the beef. They are four. The

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[533] musicians intone the kula kui while other men begin to cut the long, dry pieces of wood into small fragments. Woodcutters, slaughterers, and musicians all begin their activities at once. The wood will serve to roast the maize griddlecakes.

[525] One of the slaughterers gathers the blood in a pan, while another one holds the head and tries to cover the eyes; he believes that if he does not do so, some other cow will attack him when he goes to catch it.

/208 cont./

231 After skinning it, they quarter it following a definite
796 sequence: the lower part of the hind legs (chinda), the lower
192 part of the front legs (kuse), the upper part of the hind legs (himbé), the upper part of the front legs (pala), the tail (mens), the flesh of the neck (chikichichi), the fat (sepo), upper intestine (chunchullo), lower intestine (meto), stomach (tuchi), /209/ trachea (pechita), lungs (mechto), heart (ũs), liver
[827] (mechi), the gall (muahi), pancreas (shape)... They are familiar with most of the organs and their names, but not with their specific physiology.

262 Some of the pieces of meat go directly into the pan of
796 "mute," which is boiling and which the workers will eat for
252 lunch; others, to the barbecue where they will get the smoke from the kitchen.

Inside the house, in the fiuhne wala, the women grind shelled maize on two metates to make maize griddlecakes. With maize flour and water they make a dough which various women shape with their hands into circular form. In a separate kitchen, two women and two men are busy roasting them. First they let them harden on a piece of broken earthenware and then complete the cooking in the embers of the hearth. An elderly man gathers those that are cooked into a bag. Another one occupies himself with singing religious songs and praying. The maize griddlecakes are used to take care of the albacero on the following day.

796 This work is performed enthusiastically by the women.
[462] --The days of the fiesta are for talking, says one woman.
[829] --One can live through life only by getting drunk, says
[273] another.

4:Bernal Villa--42 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

/209 cont./

XVII

"Camarico" for the Priest

796 793 43/ At four o'clock in the afternoon the fiestero and fiestera, accompanied by their mayordomos, the cabildo, the musicians, and other people, with the church standards in front and with a profusion of gunpowder, parade past the rectory. Each one bears a gift for the priest, called camarico, which consists of victuals and meat: green bananas, potatoes, eggs, meat, and salt. First the man presents his, and then his wife. This represents a testimonial to the priest for having come to celebrate the Mass for them. The mayordomos also present him with eggs.

In the house of the albacero flutes and drums resound and shouts go up, indicating that he is ready to receive the greeting of the fiestero.

XVIII

Extravagance and Protocol

796 43/ It is five o'clock in the afternoon. In the house of the fiestero firecrackers resound, while in that of the albacero there is much excitement. /210/ Both have their own chirimías. The time for the greeting and the exchange of gifts has come.

The fiestero and his wife, preceded by the church banners and followed by many attendants, the indispensable melodies of the chirimías, and the bursting of firecrackers and skyrockets, have left their home, each with a plate covered with a brightly colored kerchief, on which they bear the gift for the albacero and his wife, respectively, consisting of a cake /bizcochuelo/, a bottle of aguardiente, one large candle of laurel wax and

/210 cont./

796 two small ones, a skyrocket, and a firecracker; in addition, an
431 assistant carries a pot of chicha. The procession moves slowly forward. The albacero and his wife, on the other hand, have also left their home, with their retinue of attendants, the shooting of firecrackers, and the strains of music, carrying with them the same gifts as those brought by the fiesteros: chicha, aguardiente, cake, firecrackers, skyrockets, and
[354] candles. An assistant carries a showy lamp, made of flexible rods in hemispherical shape, adorned with a white pellicle similar to paper, obtained from the cabuya (1), and flowers

1. Fourcroya andina.

of various colors; it has four reeds to hold the candles.

The albacero waits for the fiestero very close to his home.

At the moment of the meeting, the fiestero and his wife each take one of the church banners and they take candles, which in turn are also lighted by the albacero and his wife. They exchange them: the fiestero with the albacero, and
796 their wives with each other. Then they kneel, with the men
576 face to face and the women likewise. The fiestero presents
431 the ceremonial greeting:

--"My friend: we are meeting at this spot. I have come to see you. Accept this small cake, even though it is quite tasteless."

--"Here we are together at this spot," replies the albacero.

796 While they are saying these words, they touch each other's
431 left shoulder with the right hand and press it; the wives greet
[576] each other in the same manner; following this, the fiestera greets the albacero, and the fiestero greets the latter's wife. The same protocol is observed. Immediately afterwards they exchange the gifts, the husbands on the one hand, and the wives on the other. Everything is distributed among their respective attendants. Only the candles are retained.

/210 cont./

796 [533] Throughout all these actions, the music has not failed to sound, /211/ the ensemble of the albacero alternating with that of the fiestero. The tunes are joyous, the enthusiasm grows, and the bursts of firecrackers are frequent.

When everything has been consumed, the plates, kerchiefs, and pots are returned with mutual expressions of deep appreciation. The albacero invites the fiestero:

--"My brother: now let us go to my house. I have nothing to offer you, but what can we do."

--"Do not worry. I, too, am in the same situation as you."

They all remain in the house of the albacero until the ringing of the bells announces the hour of prayer. Very few attend, but the fiestero and albacero have an obligation to do so. The musicians go behind. The albacero sets in place the lamp which he exhibited at the greeting two hours earlier.

796 346 373 The lighting of the church is adequate. There are some 72 candles, of which those on the altar are from the fiestero and the remainder from the albacero. There are four hanging lamps of the type already described. On cross-pieces supported by vertical beams and placed so that one is close to the altar and another at the exit door, numerous candles are held in fresh clay, in the same manner as in the cornices of the walls.

796 533 The religious performances are accompanied by native music; monorhythmic and sad tunes alternate with joyous airs.

XIX

Torches and Vacaloca

796 532 While at the house of the fiestero the men kill the beef and make up the bundles of firewood and the women roast the maize cakes, in the house of the albacero the chirimía plays, chicha is drunk from gourd containers, the lamp is made, and

/211 cont./

796 the vacaloca /"crazy cow"/ is fashioned. From the angles of
532a rectangle made of four rods tied with lianas, flexible rods are attached in a semicircle; over these is hung the hide of a cow; the skull of a cow, with its horns, is attached to the front part; the facial bones are covered with newspaper on which the cow's eyes, nose, and mouth are drawn with charcoal; the horns are wrapped in cloth soaked in laurel wax; at the hind part, a bunch of defibered cabuya forms the tail. In addition, with the same waxed cloth, three /212/ torches and one large match in the shape of a cross are made, exclusively for illumination.

On leaving the prayer session, a strong, husky youth puts the crude vacaloca on his shoulders, the waxed horns and the torches previously seized by other youths are set afire, the music sounds, the firecrackers are picked up, and the game begins. The young men attempt to set the tail on fire, while the vacaloca tries to pursue them and butt them with its burning horns. The clamor and mad frenzy begin. Everyone runs, everyone defies the charges of the symbolic animal. Soon the vacaloca takes a false step and falls with a crash, causing general hilarity. The fiestero and albacero, the musicians, the participants in the game, and the others present begin to move toward the house of the albacero. There they stop the game when the fuel of the torches is exhausted and the players are overcome by fatigue.

796 Inside the dwelling, in the fiuhne wala, the musicians in one corner, the women seated on the ground, the men on the pangos, their faces made golden by the rays from the torches, wait for the distribution of the calabashes of chicha and the liters of aguardiente with which the albacero is paying attention
[273] to the fiestero. In the middle of the sala and next to one of the pangos there is a crude table, blackened by smoke, dirt, and time, with two lighted candles at the ends of it; three calabashes of chicha set on sugar-cane bagasse, two bottles of aguardiente next to the end gourds, and next to the center

/212 cont./

796 one a liter of aguardiente. The fiestero sits at the center of
273 the table, his wife sits on his right and the síndico on his left. The albacero approaches, takes the liter in his hands, measures out a cup, and offers it to the fiestero. The latter accepts it, drinks, and returns it. From the hands of the albacero he receives the cup and the liter. The proceeds in the same fashion with the calabash inside of which is the shachi léchukúe. In the same manner he offers the other bottles and gourds to
[431] the wife of the fiestero and to the síndico. The distribution begins, for which the fiestero, fiestera, and the síndico call on three men to take charge of distributing the generous gift. The aguardiente is distributed by its owners themselves, who in each cup put small pieces of cake. The clamor increases in direct proportion to the consumption. Everyone drinks
796 alike: men, women, and children. This is the time for off-
522 color, rich, and abundant joking. The hour when fantasy
273 shines and takes wings. There is practically only one theme,
831 sex in all its forms and manifestations: desires, /213/ feats, wooing, pregnancy, childbirth, genitalia, and even sham coitus in public. Any allusion to sex causes hilarity; many aspects of life, attitudes, and work are associated with sex.

796 At midnight the bottles and calabashes are empty. The
[273] music has been continuous, the drunkenness has increased ... But it is not yet over. At the house of the fiestero they are awaited with another gift.

The fiestero and the albacero dance with each other's wives. When the dance is over, everyone goes out and vanishes in the darkness of the night on paths that cannot be seen, only divined. The sound of the bass drum indicates that the people, the nasa wala, are on their way to the house of the fiestero.

There they will find the pale yellowish light, the table next to a pango and toward the center of the fluhne wala, with its two lighted candles, its calabashes of chicha, and its bottles of aguardiente. This time it is the albacero who will

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796 sit in the center, his wife on his right and the síndico on his
left. The same etiquette and the same courtesies will be ob-
[264] served. When the liquor has been drunk, there will be a meal
of cabbage and meat: large bowls for the albacero, his wife,
and the síndico. For the others it will be served on platters.
All of them will sip the broth, squeeze out the meat and
cabbage with their hands, and put it in their pouches.

796 Overcome by the fatigue induced by several sleepless
513 nights, by the chicha, and the food, they will sleep on the
ground. When dawn heralds the new day, the enormous sala,
the fiuhne wala, will present the sight of groups of people
sleeping in a promiscuity of sex and age.

XX

The Saint's Procession

796 Immediately after the Mass, with the presence of those
788 who attended it and those who did not, the procession begins,
the essence of the fiesta, according to Padre González. The
image of San Juan, adorned with many flowers, is carried on
a litter by the faithful, who frequently relieve one another,
go round the church with a great profusion of gunpowder, and
[533] finally set off the fireworks castle. The music plays incessant-
796 ly and includes the singing of religious canticles. When the
492 procession is over and the saint has been placed on the altar,
526 the men mount their horses, most of them bareback, and set
out to race madly /214/ across the plains of the locality.
They give free rein to their enthusiasm, allow their spirits
to expand, and whet their appetite for play. Groups of horse-
men in clamorous flight leave behind them their shouts of
"Viva San Juan." In everyday life action has been slow. Now
the movement and excitement seem to counteract the sluggish-
ness and heaviness of everyday life. The sweating animals

526 796 492 /214 cont./
reach the houses, where they have a short rest while their owners greedily drink the guarapo offered them by the occupants.

796 793 The fiesteros and albaceros, accompanied by a great number of people, go once more to the priest. They bring him the names of the fiesteros for the following year. The priest reads aloud the names of the fiesteros, the albaceros, and the mayordomos. The pronunciation of each name is accompanied by the ringing of a bell which is entrusted to a fiscal; when the announcement is over, there is a general pealing of bells. Each fiestero is advised by 15 to 20 mayordomos.

796 Then, kneeling in front of the church door, the old fiesteros hand over the banners to the new ones. They form a procession, and upon ending it, in the same spot where the banners were exchanged, they hand them over to the síndico, who waves them in the air one by one and ends by seeming to [787] drive them into the ground. If by chance the banner wraps it- [763] self around its own staff, some misfortune will befall the new fiestero. As a rule it is an omen of death, which fills with great sadness the fiestero whose banner had this happen to it.

Now each fiestero goes home, bearing in his hands the banner of the saint.

XXI

Banquet for the Albacero

796 574 After the procession the fiestero goes to the house of the albacero, where he receives attention with the above-mentioned calabashes of chicha and bottles of aguardiente. When this feast is over, the company moves to the house of the fiestero. In the center of the sala there stands next to the pango the table with two burning candles at the ends, the calabashes of chicha, and the liters of aguardiente. The albacero, síndico,

/214 cont./
796 and their respective wives do the honors of the table. With
574 the etiquette and courtesies already mentioned, the gift is
[576] presented to them and the corresponding distribution is made.
[431] /215/ The laborers and the fiesteros move from the sala
[576] to the kitchen and from there to the sala. "Guechi pikin ustau" (we are coming along), they say, upon entering the fiuhne wala. "Anjiha," reply those present.

The kitchen is full of prepared food, and the women are busy filling plates of various sizes; large ones, others medium-sized, and the smallest. The distributors are in charge of handing them out to the recipients. This time they will serve three different dishes:

[262] 1st, maize griddlecakes and meat; 2nd, stew made with bananas, potatoes, arracacha, and chopped meat; and 3rd, yuca, raw and cooked cabbage, and meat.

The albacero and wife and the síndico and spouse are congratulated with a bowlful of each of these three "courses." The mayordomos receive a smaller amount, and the rest of those present plates for everyday consumption.

Of these "courses," only the last one is distributed when there are many persons present. Everyone is equipped with a pouch. They sip the broth, squeeze out the solid food with their hands, and store it away in it. Drunkenness and fatigue permit little talk.

After eating, or rather, after having collected food, the
[535] music sounds. The fiestero and albacero dance with each other's wives. They carry lighted candles in their hands. The dance is slow, deliberate, halting. At the end, they all go to the house of the second fiestero to give him the church banners. He will repeat the same religious and social acts, with the same etiquette and the same courtesies.

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XXII

A Bath for San Juan

796 At four o'clock in the morning on June 24, the men, women, and children are up in every household. In that of the fiestero the kitchen fire is burning, the food is being cooked, [541] and everyone is drinking and talking. Outside, in the darkness of the night, numerous lights are shooting upward, ending with a flash accompanied by an explosion: they are the skyrockets fired out of the huts. To each explosion are added the cries: San Juan! San Juan! San Juan!

796 On the previous day and in each of the houses, a jet of 515 water was arranged to serve as a shower. Now everyone bathes. This bath is accompanied by firecrackers and shouts. /216/ This is one of the few occasions when the native bathes. For, although it is true that in childhood baths are quite frequent, adults bathe only for the fiesta of San Juan, in the washing of the dead, or when they have fever.

796 The bath of San Juan has the purpose of preventing both 515 persons and the animals that belong to them from getting sores 751 (scabies). Nevertheless, one of those who awoke in the house of the fiestero and who did not bathe palliates his fear: "I did not bathe. I have no animals. It does not matter if I get scabies."

--"You do have some, even if only 'two animals.' Bathe," replies his neighbor in a taunting, jesting tone.

--"I will bathe, but not my entire body, just my ...only."

The dialogue continues, loud and merry.

796 After the bath they catch a chicken. They all answer its squawks in chorus: San Juan, San Juan, San Juan. They [264] kill it. At six o'clock in the morning they are eating chicken stew.

In the house of the fiestero the following dialogue between parents is overheard as they hear their son crying:

/216 cont./

796 Father: "I want to beat this child because he cries too much."

Mother: "Why should you beat your child? It is not his fault. It is the fault of your penis."

431] At five o'clock in the morning the fiestero and his wife go to the house of the albacero with their "camarico": chicha, aguardiente, firecracker, skyrocket, candles, chicken, bananas, arracacha, yuca, meat, cumin seeds, and salt. At six o'clock they return.

The musicians play their instruments and the people make 522] jokes. One of them makes a taunting, jesting one referring to the activity of the previous night: "I am not going to mass, because I have no trousers. I have some, but they are stained." As the bells ring, the musicians and a few people go to mass.

XXIII

The Laborers' Day

796 When everything is over, the priest has left for Belalcázar,
465 the musicians with their swollen lips and aphonic throats have
574 gone home, and the people are gorged with chicha and aguardiente, the fiestero still has to pay attention to--to care for--his obliging laborers. /217/ /Illustration appears here./ They did not have the opportunity to parade to the house of the albacero or to vespers or in the procession. Not even to get drunk to the same degree as the guests. The fiestero is also grateful for their services. Now, in payment for it, he must take care of them. For this he has left part of the beef under the smoke of the hearth. They will have their trough of chicha, their bottles of aguardiente, their firecrackers. They will be served at the table where the albacero was attended to

4:Bernal Villa--52 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

/217 cont./

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796 and in the same fashion. Abundant food and drink will be the
465 testimonial of his gratitude. They will also have the musicians
574 and dance. They will wake up in the morning, like those at
the fiesta, lying on the ground.

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XXIV

The Race for the Rooster at Tumbichukue

103 The name of Tumbichukue is familiar to the colonists throughout Tierradentro. It is synonymous with fabulous treasures. In this place, it is said, the Paez buried all the gold and silver that they collected in the ill-fated settlement of Sebastián Quintero destroyed by them.

[131] Tumbichukue is a pass /vereda/ formed by the eastern slopes of the paramo of San Lucas and located between the Kukiyú and the Yusayú gorge (Guacharaca). It belongs to the parcialidad of Lame, and the road that goes from San Andrés [491] to Lame passes precisely there. This road is well traveled, its people more accessible to the whites.

796 On June 24 the men race their horses along the road.
541 It is a custom of Indians and whites "to race on the day of San Juan." The whites say that those who do not race their horses on the day of San Juan get scabies. The small, husky horses pant under the demands of their drunken riders. A wild race and shouts in an unsteady voice: Viva San Juan!

The people of the pass go to a small square along the road, near which lives the capitán of Lame. Indians from
184 San Andrés come to watch the race for the rooster. On the
796 other hand, in spite of the nearness, no Calderun /person from
291 Calderas/ is seen there. The women who are seen are clean,
177 with neatly braided hair; they wear black skirts, navy-blue
301 rebozos, pink blouses, numerous multi-colored necklaces,
541 bright earrings, and cloth hats. The monotonous dark or black necklaces characteristic of Paez apparel are nearly absent among these people. The classic pindo hat worn by the [491] Calderas people is absent. Spanish is spoken more frequently.

796 All the riders are concentrating on the cage and the
541 roosters.

/218 cont./

796 The cage is very similar to the lamp of the Calderun
541 albacero, with the added detail that the rods are adorned with panela candy (taffy) and carry four small flags. One of the riders reaches the cage, and on the following year he must return it exactly as it was when he took it. /219/ The candy is shared among those present, and the little flags are taken by the friends of the man who seized the cage; they must contribute to the expense.

Then comes the race for the rooster. It is spectacular. All those present closely watch the course of the game. The riders race quickly from one end to the other. As they pass beneath the rooster, they raise their hand in order to grab it, but merely graze it. The frenzy of the riders, the clamor of the people, and the bursting of firecrackers grow. Soon there is a terrible squawk, followed by a sudden silence. Two riders seized the rooster at the same time and in their hands hold fragments still quivering with life. The following year they will have to contribute a live rooster.

An informant explains that the man who gets the cage corresponds to the fiestero, the rooster to the albacero, and the flags to the mayordomos.

What follows is in the sphere of bacchic gaiety.

A chirimía delights the audience.

XXV

The Fiesta and the Numbers

796 The fiesteros are very reticent about supplying information
435 concerning the amount of their expenses. They merely say that they spend a great deal of money and among the things that they buy are arracacha, bananas, yuca, sugar cane, gunpowder, wax, salt, coca, and beeves.

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/219 cont./

796 Nevertheless, here is the value of the expenses that a
435 fiestero provided, thanks to the suggestion made at the time by the priest who officiated at the religious ceremonies.

As a rule, they kill three beeves: one for being accepted for the fiesta, another for the cleaning of the church, and the third for the attentions shown to the albacero.

Articles purchased	Cost
1 bull	$40.00
1 heifer	35.00
1 female calf	12.00
20 arrobas of maize, at 60 centavos each	12.00
Sugar cane	2.50
2 pounds of gunpowder	7.00
/220/	
1 pound of candle wick	2.50
Bananas	2.50
Arracacha	7.50
1 arroba and a half of salt	7.50
2 pounds of anise	20.00
Fees for the priest	20.00
Total....	$168.50

To this must be added the purchase of coca for the laborers.

The fiesta is thus extremely costly for the Indians, who have no money, who do not produce to sell, and whose live-
[426] stock is exchanged, not for cash, but for goods. It is true that the mayordomos contribute one peso to pay the priest's fees and that the majority of the guests bring victuals to the fiestero; nevertheless, the fiestero is left with nothing but debts, which he will not pay off in less than three years.

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XXVI

Religious Fiestas

796 Among the Paez there are no secular collective celebrations. All are religious. They celebrate with pomp and grandeur: San Andrés, Semana Santa, San Juan, San Pedro and San Pablo, La Santa Cruz, El Día de Difuntos, La Inmaculada Concepción...

(178) The Lazarist missionary, David González, says that as
[179] far back as 1689 the fiestas were organized as they were found
[177] in 1905, that is to say, as they are today. Each pueblo was granted a patron saint and various other protectors. In spite of this, only San Juan Bautista and San Pedro and San Pablo, whose fiestas are celebrated when maize is eared /en macollaje/, the rains are heavier, and the winds are violent, the day of the dead /el día de difuntos/ with its offerings to the souls, the Inmaculada Concepción, when grain is abundant, and the Semana Santa (El Resucitado /The Resurrected/) were the fiestas and saints that aroused the most enthusiasm and sank the deepest roots in the souls of these natives.

771 The Paez, and especially those of Calderas, are religious
796 in externals, not in conviction; they are more concerned with
182 form than with substance. This is revealed in the religious fiestas of these natives. /221/ Few of them attend mass, and fewer yet pray at vespers. To the great majority of them, religious fiestas mean a squandering of gunpowder, lights, aguardiente, and chicha. An abundance of food. The pleasure of getting together. The joy of contact. The music, which assuages hardship, and the dancing, an exteriorization of feelings. It is the expansiveness that leads to gatherings, the sexual jokes that spring up among them without misgivings; it is the continuous drunkenness. It is the display of generosity, the exercises in co-operation and altruism.

796 The priest, as a punishment for failure to attend the Mass
793 on the part of the chief fiestero and albacero, refused to carry
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4:Bernal Villa--57 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

/221 cont./

793 out the procession. The latter, reeling from chicha and lack
796 of sleep, arrived at the end of the Mass and learned of the
798 decision of the priest, who in addition advised them to save the gunpowder for the procession on the following day. They left. And although they did not march around the church and did not bear on their shoulders the image of the saint, they fired all the firecrackers, the skyrockets, and the fireworks castle to the strains of their native music. The procession was carried out symbolically.

796 The women and the men are dark in complexion and in
142 apparel. At these celebrations it is not unusual to see them
291 dressed in bright colors and brightly colored beads.
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[For information on the use of the vacaloca in the Paez fiesta of San Juan, see category 796.]